Westons Farm Limited

Agricultural Worker's Dwelling Appraisal

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Executive Summary

- This report is an appraisal of an application for the conversion of a building, to provide an agricultural worker's dwelling for Mr David Exwood of Westons Farm Limited, at Westons Farm, Itchingfield.
- Westons Farm Limited totals 970 hectares (2,397 acres) and produces a range of vegetables, pork, lamb, and traditional beef for direct retail though a farm shop, as well as combinable crops for the domestic grain market. The farm operates a dairy beef system, finishing 240 animals per year, however this will increase to 300 animals per year.
- The current livestock enterprises total 50 ewes and 35 suckler cows, with their associated progeny and replacements, a pig herd of up to 10 head and up to 480 head of beef animals, however this will increase to 600 head of beef animals.
- The livestock are currently centred around two farmyards, Westons Farm, being home to the sheep flock, suckler herd and pigs and Sluetts Farm, which houses the dairy beef enterprise. A new livestock building has planning permission at Field Farm, Dial Post and is due to be constructed in 2024.
- There is one existing permanent dwelling on the holding, located at Westons Farm, and one temporary agricultural worker's dwelling at Sluetts Farm, however in order for the business to continue to operate effectively and provide for the welfare of the livestock, a second dwelling is required at Westons Farm.
- There are no proposed changes to the current farming system associated with the application and based on the current farming system:
    - There is a clear functional and essential need for an agricultural worker's dwelling due to the all year labour requirement and nature of the current livestock enterprises.
    - There is one existing worker's dwelling at Westons Farm, however the occupation of this dwelling is restricted to Mr Exwood personally.
    - There is no other suitable accommodation available on the unit or elsewhere in the location principally due to the affordability of the accommodation in the locality.
    - The dwelling is suitably located to meet the identified functional need of the enterprise, being within sight and sound of the livestock buildings at Westons Farm.
    - There is a reasonable expectation that the business will continue to be financially viable, having traded from the holding for over thirty years.
- The application therefore complies with the exceptional circumstances required in the NPPF, Policy 20 of the Horsham District Planning Framework, and Policy 21 of the draft Horsham District Local Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Savills Food & Farming (Savills) is instructed by Mr David Exwood of Westons Farm Limited to undertake an appraisal of the need for a further agricultural worker's dwelling at Westons Farm, Itchingfield, RH13 0BD. The holding forms part of the Westons Farm tenancy, which is farmed by Westons Farm Limited business.

1.2. This report is prepared by Stuart Nicholls; Food & Farming Consultant for Savills (UK) Ltd. Savills is an international property consultancy company with a specialist rural advisory business, providing financial and strategic business advice to landowners, farmers, and foresters.

1.3. I have over a decade of industry experience, having worked in advisory and practical capacities on farms and estates across the UK. I am a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) and a Member of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants (BIAC).

1.4. I have previously undertaken planning appraisals for Mr Exwood, both on the proposed site and for the wider holding, and Mr Exwood provided information on the current business enterprises in June 2024.

2. Background

2.1. Mr David Exwood, trading as Westons Farm Limited, operates a mixed livestock, market gardening and arable farming operation totalling 970 hectares (2,397 acres). The business produces a range of vegetables, pork, lamb, and traditional breed beef for direct retail through a farm shop, as well as combinable crops for the domestic grain market. In conjunction with this, the farm operates a dairy beef system.

2.2. The principal holdings that relate to the essential need for rural worker's dwellings on Westons Farm Limited are Westons Farm and Field Farm, Dial Post. This report does not consider the wider Westons Farm Limited holding in detail because the essential need for agricultural worker's dwellings are driven by that of livestock the enterprises, which are based within the Westons Farm & Field Farm tenancies. Whilst the wider holding provides grazing and forage crops for these enterprises, there is no livestock accommodation on this land.

Westons Farm

2.3. Westons Farm, which extends to c. 320ha (791 acres), comprising of c. 28ha (69 acres) of permanent pasture and c. 289ha (713 acres) of arable land, with the balance principally woodland, farmyards and tracks. The farm is let to Mr Exwood on a Farm Business Tenancy that expires in September 2034 and has been farmed by Mr Exwood since 1989.

2.4. There are two ranges of farm buildings on Westons Farm; Westons Farm yard and Sluetts Farm yard.

2.5. Westons Farm yard can be viewed as a traditional farmyard that has grown organically over time and offers a well-equipped farmyard with a range of traditional and modern farm buildings, as detailed in Table 1. It is home to the sheep flock, suckler cows and pig herd. The traditional buildings have been repurposed for a farm shop and office.

2.6. There is one existing dwelling at Westons Farm, however under the terms of the Farm Business Tenancy, the occupation of this is restricted personally to Mr David Exwood.

Building	Plan Number
Traditional farm buildings including a farm office and farm shop	1
General purpose steel portal frame store	2
Farm and machinery workshop	3
Grain store	4
Temporary grain store / machinery store / livestock housing	5
Greenhouses	6
Farmhouse	7

Table 1: Westons Farm yard



Image 1: Westons Farm yard[1]

[1] Google Maps Westons Farm 51°02'57.7"N 0°22'42.1"W [online] Available through https://www.google.co.uk/maps/ [Accessed 18 April 2022]

2.7. Sluetts Farm yard is a former dairy unit and is home to the dairy beef system. The yard has a range of existing agricultural buildings as detailed within Table 2.

2.8. Planning permission for a temporary agricultural worker's dwelling at Sluetts was approved in February 2024 under planning application DC/23/0306.

Building	Plan Number
Straw store	1
Livestock buildings	2
Cattle Shed North	3
Cattle Shed South	4
Silage clamps	5
Slurry lagoon	6
Temporary Agricultural Worker's Dwelling	7
Feed store	8

Table 2: Sluetts Farm yard



Image 2: Sluetts Farm yard[2]

2.9. The predominant soil type of Westons Farm, as identified on the Soil Map of England and Wales, is WICKHAM 5, described as drift over Cretaceous clay and sandstone suitable for dairying on short term grassland, some cereals, some fruit in West Sussex and deciduous woodland.

2.10. Although not designed to be a field scale assessment, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (1983) identifies the farm as Grade 3 and Grade 4. Grade 3 is described as good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops, timing, and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2. Grade 4 is described as poor-quality agricultural land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (for example cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties using the land. The grade also includes arable land that is very dry because of drought.

[2] Google Maps Sluetts Farm 51°02'34.4"N 0°21'07.2"W [online] Available through https://www.google.co.uk/maps/ [Accessed 6 June 2024]

2.11. The land at Westons Farm is managed under a Sustainable Farming Incentive agreement.

2.12. The holding lies partly within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). There is not a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the holding, nor does it lie nor within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or a National Park.

Field Farm

2.13. Field Farm, extends to c. 181ha (446 acres), comprising of c. 18ha (45 acres) of permanent pasture and c. 152ha (377 acres) of arable land, with the balance principally woodland, farmyards and tracks. The farm is let to Mr Exwood on a sixteen-year Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) that expires in September 2034 and has been farmed by Mr Exwood since Christ's Hospital Foundation purchased the land in October 2017.

2.14. There are two modern agricultural buildings at Field Farm, which have been erected since the land was purchased in 2017, as detailed in Table 3. A prior notification was submitted for a 990m2 livestock building under application DC/24/0494 and it was determined that prior approval was not required for this building. It is proposed that this building will be constructed during 2024. There are no dwellings at Field Farm.

Building	Plan Number	Building Size (m^2)
Grain store 1	1	990
Grain store 2	2	990
Proposed livestock building	3	990
TOTAL		**2,970**

Table 3: Field Farm yard



Image 2: Field Farm – Existing Agricultural Buildings[3]

2.15. The predominant soil type of Field Farm, as identified on the Soil Map of England and Wales, is WICKHAM 1, described as drift over Cretaceous clay or mudstone suitable for dairying on short term grassland, winter cereals. Deciduous woodland is also commonly found in the High Weald of Kent and Sussex[4].

2.16. Although not designed to be a field scale assessment, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (1983) identifies the farm as Grade 3 and Grade 4. Grade 3 is described as good to moderate quality agricultural land with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops, timing, and type of cultivation, harvesting or the level of yield. Where more demanding crops are grown yields are generally lower or more variable than on land in Grades 1 and 2. Grade 4 is described as poor-quality agricultural land with severe limitations which significantly restrict the range of crops and/or level of yields. It is mainly suited to grass with occasional arable crops (for example cereals and forage crops) the yields of which are variable. In moist climates, yields of grass may be moderate to high but there may be difficulties using the land. The grade also includes arable land that is very dry because of drought.

[3] Google Maps Field Farm 50°57'31.79"N, 0°20'59.52"W [online] Available through https://www.google.co.uk/maps/ [Accessed 6 June 2024]

[4] Soil Survey of England and Wales 1:250,000 Soil Map

2.17. The land at Field Farm is managed under a Sustainable Farming Incentive agreement and is part of the Upper Adur Landscape Recovery scheme.

2.18. The holding does not fall within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). There is not a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the holding, nor does it lie nor within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or a National Park.

3. Current & Proposed Farming System

3.1. The Westons Farm and Field Farm arable land is farmed a rotation typical for the soil type and area, comprising principally of winter cereal cropping, temporary grass, and maize. Straw is baled for livestock bedding and feed use, or chopped behind the combine, subject to cropping, demand, and agronomic advice.

3.2. Grass silage is principally made from the temporary grassland in the arable rotation and higher quality permanent pasture, with hay made from lower quality permanent pasture. Principally all home-grown maize is conserved as silage, with any surplus combined as grain maize for animal feed for the dairy beef enterprise.

3.3. The livestock enterprises on Westons Farm Limited consist of:

- 50 ewes - spring lambing flock
- 35 suckler cows – spring calving herd
- 10 fattening pigs – average herd size
- 240 beef animals – dairy beef system, head finished annually.

3.4. The construction of the new livestock building at Field Farm will increase the number of dairy beef animals finished annually to 300 head.

3.5. The suckler herd, sheep flock and pigs are currently located at Westons Farm yard. The dairy beef enterprise is located at Sluetts Farm, and as part of a more regenerative approach to the arable land at Field Farm, a 120 head beef unit will be established here. Addition of organic matter from farmyard manure and slurry from the livestock systems forms a key part of the arable system on the holding.

3.6. The sheep, suckler herd and pigs provide produce for the farm shop, located at Westons Farm. Principally, all progeny are reared through to finishing and finished throughout the year to provide a constant supply of home raised meat for the shop.

3.7. Approximately 240 two-week-old autumn born dairy beef calves are purchased annually and reared through to finishing at c. 22 months old. The beef calves are grazed for their first summer, before being housed in the autumn at c. 12 months old and taken through to finishing. This number will increase to 300 when the new livestock building is constructed at Field Farm.

3.8. All farming operations are carried out in house, with the exception of baling and forage conservation, for which local contractors are used.

3.9. There is a strong focus on cost of production in both the arable and beef enterprises. There are no changes to the farming system on Westons Farm, nor the wider Westons Farm Limited, associated with the proposed development, with the exception of the expansion of the dairy beef enterprise.

3.10. The farm buildings at Sluetts Farm yard have had significant investment, modernising the facilities with the erection of a replacement livestock building, new feedstore and extension to the existing cattle buildings. The holding is subject to further investment in replacement silage clamps and hard standing, secured under planning application DC/22/0953.

4. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the relevant national policy in this matter. The NPPF was revised on 19th December 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

4.2. This revised Framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2019, revised in July 2021, and updated in September 2023.

4.3. Paragraph 845 of the NPPF states that "*planning policies and decision should avoid development of isolated homes in the countryside unless…there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside*".

4.4. Section five of this report will demonstrate the essential need for rural workers to live at Westons Farm.

Local Planning Policy

4.5. Horsham District Council (HDC) approved the Horsham District Local Plan Regulation 19 document for 2023-2040 at a Full Council meeting on 11 December 2023. The public consultation closed on 1 March 2024. According to HDC's Local Development Scheme, the intention is for the new Local Plan to be adopted in May 2025. Emerging policies gain more weight as they move through the preparation process to adoption. In light of the above, the emerging HDLP is considered to carry reduced weight at present.

4.6. HDC's current local plan is the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (HDPF) adopted in November 2015. Itchingfield Parish have produced a neighbourhood plan which has been subject to successful Examination but cannot proceed to Referendum because of the legal requirements in relation to Water Neutrality and the Habitat Regulations.

4.7. Policy 20, Rural Workers Accommodation, of the Horsham District Planning Framework[6] states that "*outside the defined built-up area new housing for rural workers will be supported provided that:*

1. *There is a functional need for the dwelling and the occupation of the dwelling is to support the established business use.*
2. *Evidence is submitted to demonstrate the viability of the rural business for which the housing is required."*

[5] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - National Planning Policy Framework

[6] Horsham District Council - Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) November 2015 https://www.horsham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/60190/Horsham-District-Planning-Framework-November-2015.pdf

4.8. Policy 20 goes on to states that "*the use or redevelopment of existing buildings will be encouraged to bring redundant buildings back into use. Where a building of heritage value would be reused or renovated for rural workers accommodation this will be viewed positively*."

4.9. Policy 21, Rural Workers' Accommodation[7], is the relevant policy in the draft Local Plan and states that " *outside the defined built-up area new housing for rural workers will be supported provided that*:

1. *There is a functional need for the dwelling and the occupation of the dwelling is to support the established business use*
2. *Evidence is submitted to demonstrate the viability of the rural business for which the housing is required*
3. *A new dwelling cannot be provided by redeveloping an existing building on the site; and*
4. *The size of the dwelling is proportionate to the essential need of the business and is well related to existing buildings on site."*

4.10. Section five of this report will demonstrate the that the criteria of Policy 20 are met in relation to the application for a further agricultural worker's dwelling at Westons Farm.

[7] Horsham District Council - Draft Horsham District Local Plan 2019-2036
https://strategicplanning.horsham.gov.uk/LocalPlanReview/viewCompoundDoc?docid=10336756

5. Appraisal

5.1. The appraisal only considers the livestock enterprises on Westons Farm Limited because these principally give rise to the essential need for an agricultural worker's dwelling.

Functional and Essential Need

5.2. The Planning Practice Guidance[8] category Housing needs of different groups states that the essential need for rural worker's dwellings should consider:

> *"evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);*

5.3. Due to the current farming system, there is a clear all round functional need for the effective operation of the farm as summarised in Table 4.

Month	Sheep	Cattle	Pigs
January			Care of piglets
February			Care of piglets
March	Lambing	Calving	Care of piglets
April	Lambing Care of young lambs	Calving Care of young calves	Care of piglets
May	Lambing Care of young lambs	Calving Care of young calves	Care of piglets
June	Care of young lambs	Care of young calves	Care of piglets
July			Care of piglets
August		Care of young calves	Care of piglets
September		Care of young calves	Care of piglets
October		Care of young calves	Care of piglets
November		Care of young calves	Care of piglets
December			Care of piglets

Table 4: Westons Farm Limited – Summary of Functional Need

[8] Planning practice guidance – Housing needs of different groups Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722 Revision date: 22 07 2019

Animal Welfare

5.4. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal and to ensure that animals are kept in a manner which accords them freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter, the prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment or injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

5.5. The Act also contains a Duty to Care for animals which means that anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to make sure the animal's needs and its welfare are met.

5.6. The farm currently rears 240 pre-weaned dairy beef calves through to finishing annually, meaning 240 calves are brought onto the holding each year. this number will increase to 300 when the new livestock building is constructed at Field Farm. The calves are purchased in the autumn, principally from one autumn calving dairy herd to minimise the chances of diseases being bought in from multiple holdings, and for ease of management.

5.7. However, the susceptibility to disease and incidence of bovine respiratory diseases and scour is greater in dairy beef calves than suckler calves, meaning calves require close monitoring when moved onto the farm 24 hours of the day. Young animals are more vulnerable to problems and diseases and issues can arise more rapidly and have more significant consequences than in older stock. Rapid identification and treatment of sick animals can lead to an effective response, preventing both unnecessary suffering from a welfare perspective but also preventing financial losses.

5.8. The dairy beef system has suffered from a number of losses in recent winters as a result of cattle being spooked at night, with three cattle getting stuck in water troughs as a result of this over the last two years, two of which died. A third animal broke its leg within the same time period, which necessitated it being put down. An on-site presence has been identified as the practical solution. When cattle are distressed, they will typically bellow, as will other animals in the herd. An on-site presence would allow for animals to be checked out of hours in such an instance, because the bellowing would be heard, and any issues quickly identified and dealt with, preventing unnecessary suffering from a welfare perspective, and also preventing financial losses. Furthermore an onsite presence is more likely to be aware of animals being spooked (for example because of trespass / thunder & lightening etc.) and allow stock to be monitored and observed closely after this.

5.9. The farm has a flock of breeding ewes. Once lambing begins, the ewes will need checking regularly to ensure that any problem lambings are dealt with and that lambs suckle to receive colostrum within the first few hours of life. Lambs will need checking regularly to ensure that they are suckling well from the ewe, with intervention needed if lambs are not. Ewes will need monitoring closely post-partum to ensure there are no associated complications.

5.10. The farm has a herd of suckler cows. Once calving begins, the cows will need regularly checking to ensure that any problem calvings are dealt with and that calves suckle to receive colostrum within the first few hours of life. Calves will need regularly checking to ensure that they are drinking from the cow, with intervention needed if calves are not. Cows will need careful monitoring post-partum to ensure there are no associated complications.

5.11. The farm purchases a weaned piglets throughout the year to take them through to finishing. When piglets are first bought onto the holding, they will be more susceptible to disease and will require close monitoring to ensure that stock. Rapid identification and treatment of sick piglets can lead to an effective response, preventing both unnecessary suffering from a welfare perspective but also preventing financial losses.

Labour

5.12. As part of the functional and essential test, the farming system should be sufficient to require one or more people to live at the site of their work. As this is an application for a third dwelling on the holding, the farming system should require a minimum of three full time labour units to support a third dwelling on the holding. The table below only considers the labour requirement for the livestock enterprises on the holding because these give rise for the essential need for a worker's dwelling. The data in Table 5 is based on the annual labour requirements for livestock in the John Nix Farm Pocketbook for Farm Management 2024 54th Edition.

Enterprise	Head	Hours per head per year	Total hours per enterprise
Sheep - spring lambing[9]	50	4	200
Sheep – finishing lambs[10]	75	2.4	180
Suckler cows - spring calving[11]	35	10.8	378
Suckler stores[12]	32	8.8	282
Pigs - weaners[13]	10	1.92	19
Calf rearing[14]	300	11.4	3,420
Beef finishing[15]	300	10	3,000
Sub-total man hours			**7,479**
Management hours (15%)			1,122
Total hours			**8,601**

Table 5: Westons Farm Limited – Livestock Enterprise Labour Requirement

5.13. One Standard Man Year (SMY) is equivalent to 2,200 hours and equates to a notional 275 eight-hour days. The annual requirement for the current livestock enterprises on Westons Farm Limited is equivalent to 3.91 SMYs, equating to 3.91 full time employees on the livestock enterprises.

[9] Lowland ewe

[10] Winter finishing store lambs

[11] Beef Cows (single suckler including calf)

[12] Finishing Suckler bred stores

[13] Feeding only i.e. nor breeding and rearing

[14] Calves, early weaning combined average 0-6 months and 6 months summer grazed

[15] Stores, yearling housed, assumes average finishing age of 22 months

All Year Labour Demand

5.14. There is a need for an additional on-site presence throughout the year because:

- Ewes will be lambing from March-May, requiring close attention pre- and post-partum.
- Suckler cows will be calving March-May requiring close attention pre- and post-partum.
- Two-week-old calves are bought onto the holding in the Autumn, requiring close monitoring.
- Weaned piglets are bought onto the holding throughout the year, requiring close monitoring.
- The worker's dwelling, located at Westons Farm, can only be occupied by Mr Exwood and he is not able to be readily available at all hours due to off farm commitments.
- In recent years, there have been a number of unexplained deaths in the winter months in the diary beef animals housed at Sluetts Farm, which can only be addressed by an on-site presence.

Security

5.15. The planning practice guidance 'Housing needs of different groups' identifies that security is a relevant consideration where there would be a risk of crime[16].

5.16. The number of dog attacks is well publicised to be on the rise, with the 2021 NFU Rural Crime Report[17] a 10.2% increase in the toll of dog attacks on farm animals, equating to losses of £1.3m. Due to the extensive grazing area on Westons Farm Limited, dog worrying is of concern.

5.17. Fly tipping in fields, gateway and country lanes is a national problem, with local authorities having dealt with 1.13m fly tipping incidents in the 2020/21 year, an increase of 16% from the 2019/20 year[18].

5.18. The farm has an extensive array of machinery, equipment, and tools, which is highly vulnerable to theft.

5.19. An on-site presence would deter attempted thefts and would allow any incidents, such as attempted break-ins and dog attacks to be dealt with promptly.

[16] Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - Housing needs of different groups Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722 Revision date: 22 07 2019

[17] NFU The Impact on Our Communities - Rural Crime Report 2021

[18] DEFRA Official Statistics Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2020 to 2021 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england/fly-tipping-statistics-for-england-2020-to-2021

Alternative Accommodation

5.20. It is reasonable to consider if there is any other suitable accommodation sufficiently close and affordable within the local area.

5.21. A search, conducted on 6th June 2024, on Right Move identified that no houses had been sold within the RH13 0LB postcode, however when the search was extended to within one mile of the postcode, 14 properties had sold within the last year with an average price of £589,000.

5.22. Assuming a 25-year repayment mortgage, with an interest rate of 8%, the annual mortgage cost of a property sold for £589,000 (assuming a 10% deposit) would be £49,097 per annum. The interest only cost would be £42,408.

5.23. Mortgage payments of £49,097 are 1.95[19] times the average agricultural worker's wage. This demonstrates that affordability is an issue.

5.24. With 14 properties sold within one mile of the site within the last 12 months, availability may not be considered to be an issue, however, the cost of alternative accommodation is itself prohibitive to agricultural businesses.

5.25. There are two existing dwellings available to Westons Farm Limited, located at Westons Farm and Sluetts Farm. Under this application, it is proposed that an existing building at Westons Farm will be converted to provide a third dwelling.

5.26. The holding has a labour requirement for four full time workers on the livestock enterprises alone. Whilst there would not be a requirement for all workers to live on site, the farm has a need for three full time workers on the holding, allowing for one worker to be on leave, and two workers to be readily available at all times to deal with emergencies.

5.27. Due to the large numbers of livestock on the holding, it is reasonable to consider that multiple parties may be required at short notice in the case of an emergency.

5.28. Mr David Exwood is required to occupy the farmhouse at Westons Farm as part of the terms of his tenancy, however, he has extensive off farm commitments, meaning that he is not readily available at all times to deal with emergencies. The dwelling is not able to be made available to other workers due to the terms of the tenancy agreement.

[19] National Minimum Wage - £11.44/hr aged 25 and over from April 2024, assumes 2,200 hours per year – one standard man year

Siting of Proposed Dwelling

5.29. The proposed dwelling is to be sited at Westons Farm. Whilst there is one existing dwelling at Westons Farm, there is a requirement within the tenancy that Mr Exwood occupies the dwelling. Due to his off farm commitments, he is not able to be readily available at all times, meaning that there is often not a presence on the holding to address emergencies. The proposed dwelling is withing sight and sound of the livestock buildings at Westons Farm, making it suitable for an occupant to be readily available at all times.

Financial Viability

5.30. Westons Farm Limited was incorporated in September 2020 and previously traded as a sole trader/partnership since 1989. There are no proposed changes to the farming system associated with the application. The application is for the conversion of a building to create a second agricultural worker's dwelling for a well-established farming business and therefore there is a reasonable expectation that the business will continue to be financially viable.

5.31. Further detail on the financial history of the trading business can be made available upon request.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Westons Farm Limited operate multiple livestock enterprises and will house stock across three principal holdings. The business requires an additional permanent agricultural worker's dwelling in order to continue to operate effectively from the holding and provide for the livestock's welfare requirements.

6.2. There is a clearly established functional and essential need for the proposed dwelling, with the livestock enterprises on the holding having a requirement for four full time labour units, with an all-year-round labour demand.

6.3. There is no other suitable accommodation available on the holding, or in the locality, with affordability of alternative accommodation being the principal issue.

6.4. The dwelling is suitably located, within sight and sound of the livestock buildings, to meet the functional need of the livestock enterprises on the holding and is a conversion of an existing building.

6.5. Mr Exwood has been trading for over thirty years at Westons Farm, and there are no proposed changes to the farming system associated with the application, meaning there is a reasonable expectation that the business will continue to be financially viable.

6.6. The proposal therefore meets the exceptional circumstances required in the NPPF and both Policy 20 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and Policy 21 of the draft Horsham District Local Plan.

Appendix 1 – Westons Farm Limited

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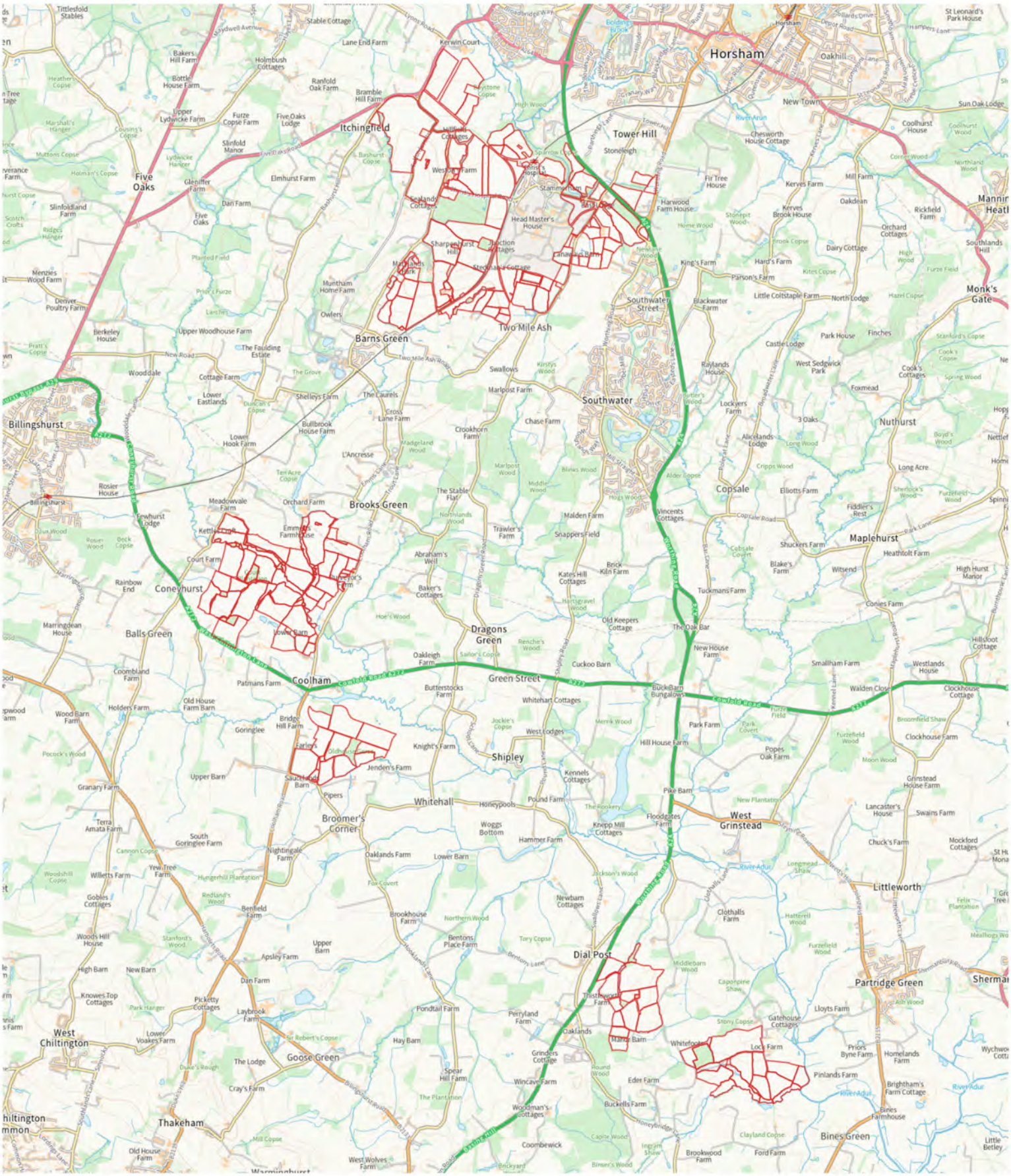
Land App



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Appendix 2 – Westons Farm Limited Designations

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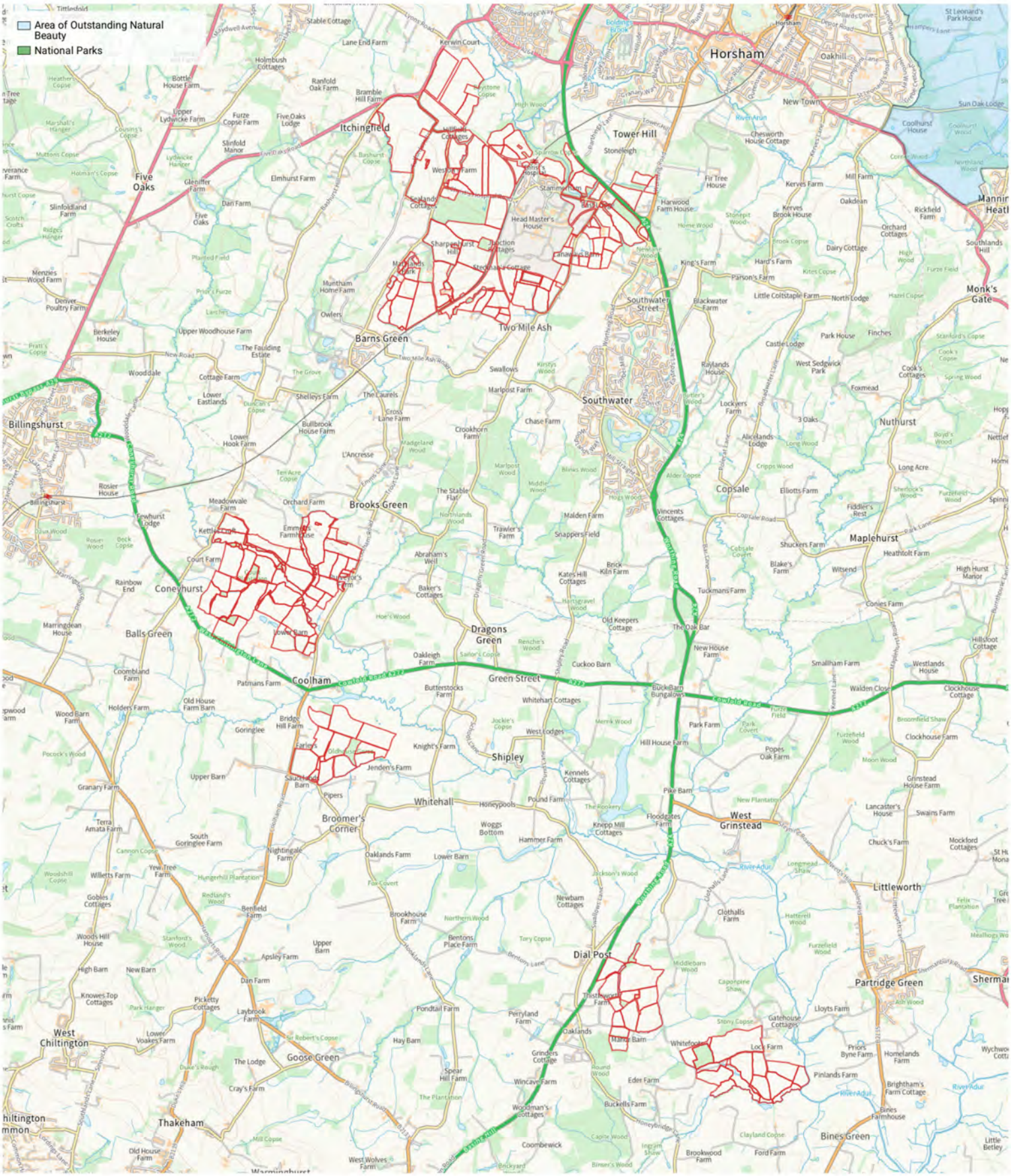

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Farm Designations

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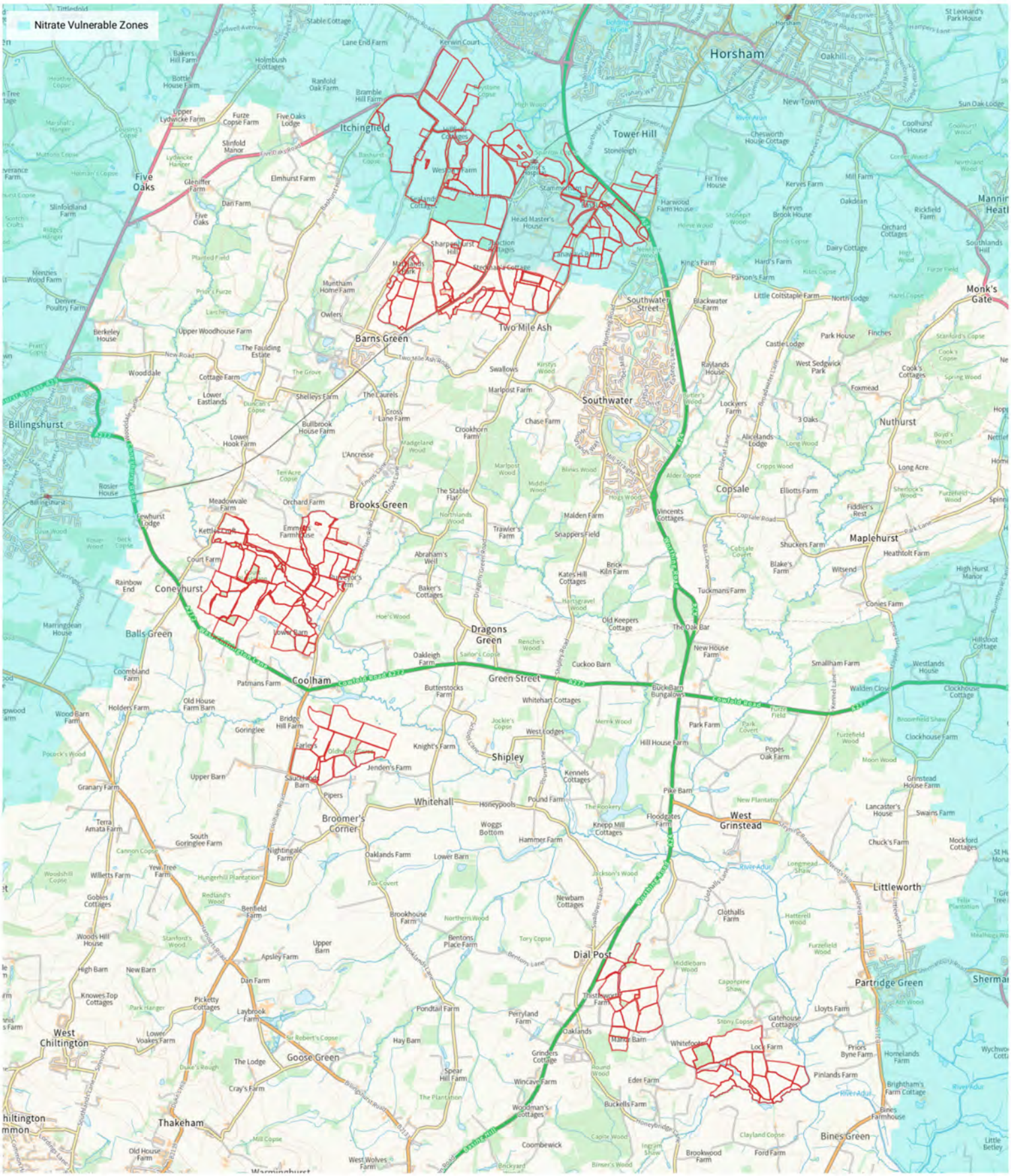
Land App



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Farm Designations

2 km

Scale 1:60952 (at A4)

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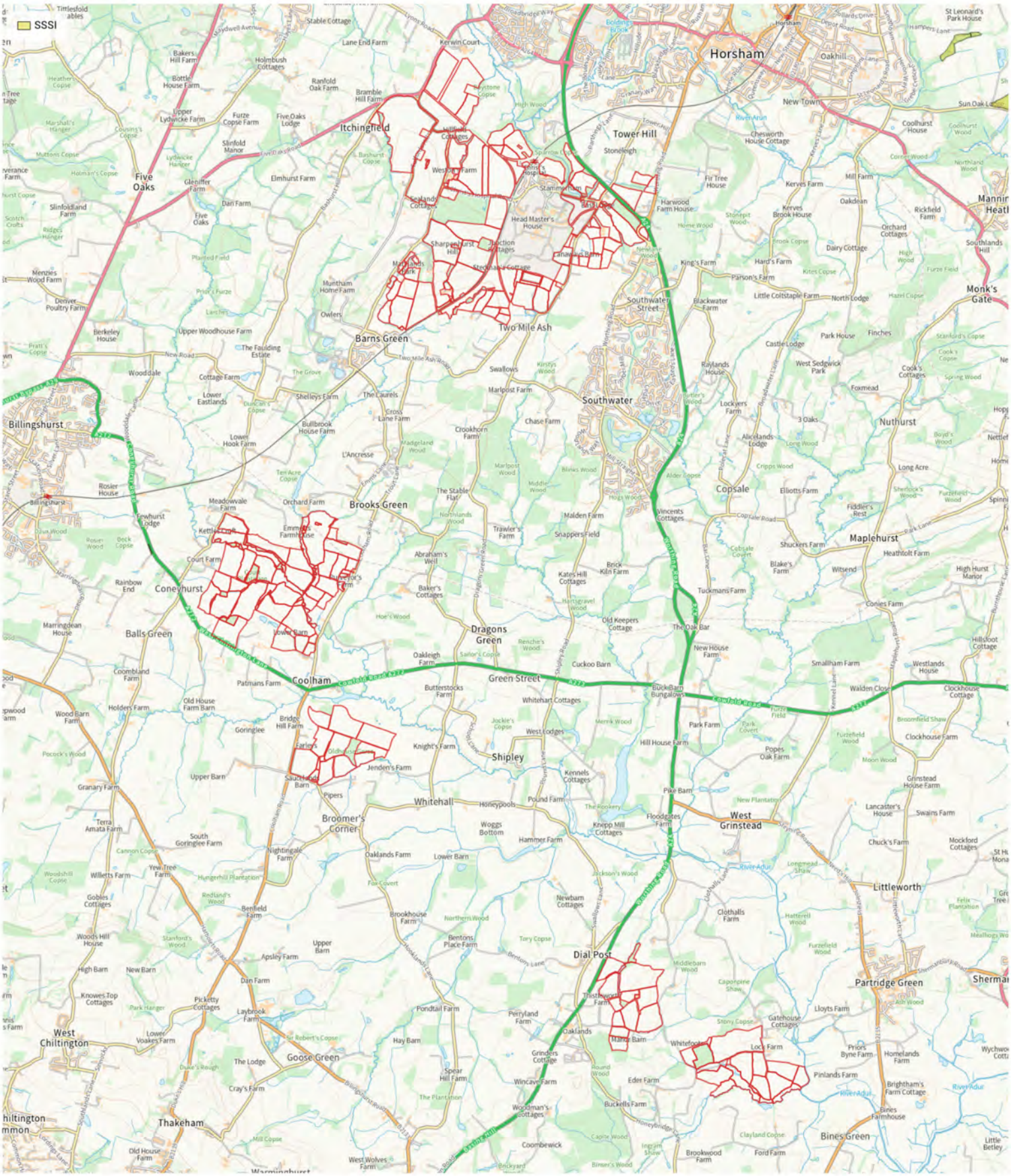
Westons Farm Limited

Land App



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Farm Designations

2 km

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